

## Web-based tools prepare Families for relocation

*By Jessica Lipari, USAG Bamberg Public Affairs*

BAMBERG, Germany – Time to move again? Relocation can be a high-stress time for even the most well-organized family.

Frequent moves are a reality for most military Families.

Soldiers and their Families move twice as much as the national average and to locations all across the globe, said Jeffrey Card, Relocation Readiness Program manager.

Army Community Services provides multiple resources to aid Soldiers and family members with their relocation.

“The key to a successful move is preparation, so our focus is to make sure those individuals transitioning out of the community are aware of the resources at their disposal,” Card said. “Our primary focus on newcomers is getting them integrated into the community and functioning effectively in the shortest possible time.”

In conjunction with the RRP, web-based tools are available to help reduce stress and provide resources 24/7, he said. These tools allow people who are transitioning to research and plan their move, which can be tailored to the needs of the user.

The website Plan My Move is convenient and detailed, he said. The user enters their current duty station, where they are being reassigned and their departure date. From there, the web-based tool provides users with a moving planning calendar and allows them to take control of their move. The calendar provides a three-month outlook prior to their departure date and walks users through the day-to-day process. Each task on the calendar provides a hyperlink to more detailed information for that task and the calendar is customizable to suit each user's needs.

Users can also print checklists for travelling and documents to hand-carry, along with important telephone numbers.

Links through Plan My Move will direct users to Move.mil, which is a Defense Personal Property System that was created to manage service members' household good moves. Benefits of this system include self-counseling and submittal of applications online, tracking shipments and filing a claim online to settle directly with the moving company.

“People like to know about the area they're moving to; the schools and childcare; housing availability and employment for their spouses,” Card said.

A website called Military Installations provides detailed information on the installation, contacts, photos, unit contacts and local community information. One can create a customized installation booklet to have readily available with information specific for their family needs.

Army Housing Online User Services provides information on housing. Community members can view floor plans for on-post housing, calculate the basic allowance for housing or overseas housing allowance, and view their position on the waiting list for on-post housing. General information is provided for off-post housing estimated costs as well as links to direct the user to other sources of information.

“Use the Relocation Readiness page from the U.S. Army Garrison Bamberg website; it includes links to all the websites discussed and more,” said Card. “The page provides one-stop shopping solutions for relocating families.”

### **SIDEBAR:**

#### **Relocation web-based tools websites**

- Plan My Move: <http://apps.mhf.dod.mil/pls/psgprod/f?p=PMM:ENTRY:0>
- Military Installations: [www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil](http://www.militaryinstallations.dod.mil)
- Move.mil: [www.move.mil](http://www.move.mil)
- Army Housing Online User Services: <https://www.housing.army.mil/ah/>
- USAG Bamberg Relocation Readiness: <http://www.bamberg.army.mil/directorates/dfmwr/acs/rr.asp>
- Military One Source: [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com)
- Army Career and Alumni Program: [www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil)

## **SIDEBAR:**

### **Top ten things to consider when relocating**

*By Jeffrey Card, Relocation Readiness Program manager*

1. Plan for pets: Not every pet can go everywhere and they may require special and pricey arrangements. Contact the installations local veterinary clinic. For more information call, 0951-300-7972.
2. Make an inventory of household goods: Not having thorough documentation of household goods will impair the ability to file a claim in the case of loss or damaged items.
3. Hand carry critical items: Packing medication, glasses and copies of documents can become a major inconvenience or health hazard.
4. Contact important offices prior to arrival: There may be waiting lists for several services; get on them prior to arriving. Phone numbers can be found in the installations phone book.
5. Have a sponsor: Sponsors provide newcomers with critical guidance, transportation, communication and moral support.
6. Create a financial plan: Unanticipated costs associated with a move can present a major financial burden to relocating families.
7. Start passport/visa/immigration paperwork in time: Paperwork needs to be started at least 120 days prior to a travel date.
8. Don't move family without proper travel orders: Expenses for family members brought over without approval will have to be paid out of the Soldier's pocket.
9. Get properly Exceptional Family Members Program screened: The screening process is important to receive command sponsorship as well as to ensure the installation can accommodate their unique needs.
10. Don't move family without command sponsorship: Moving family without command sponsorship creates a big out-of-pocket expense and family members will not be entitled to logistical support or access to critical services.